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Perfectionism and coping styles with stress

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between perfectionism and coping styles with stress in a sample of students. 378 students were included in this study. All participants were asked to complete the Farsi version of the Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale (FPANPS) and the Tehran Coping Styles Scale (TCSS). The results revealed that positive perfectionism was positively associated with problem-focused and positive emotional focused coping styles, and negatively associated with negative emotional focused coping style. The results also revealed that negative perfectionism was negatively associated with problem-focused and positive emotional focused coping styles, and positively associated with negative emotional focused coping style.

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Keywords: Perfectionism, stress, coping.

1. Introduction

Investigators view perfectionism as a multidimensional construct and research has determined that different components are related differentially to maladaptive and some adaptive qualities (for reviews see Bieling et al. 2004; Blankstein and Dunkley, 2006; Enns and Cox, 2002; Parker, 2002; Shafran and Mansell, 2001; Stoeber and Otto, 2006). Findings of the research corroborate the existence of a type of normal perfectionism as compared with neurotic perfectionism (Stumpf and Parker, 2000; Terry, Owenz, Slade and Dewway, 1995; Suddarth and Slaney, 2001; Hamachek, 1978). One dimension has been described as normal, healthy adaptive and positive perfectionism. It comprises some aspects of the perfectionism which is related to having high personal criteria, determination of exact criteria for actions and endeavors for attaining excellence. Another dimension has been described as neurotic unhealthy inadaptive or negative perfectionism. It comprises those aspects of the perfectionism which are related to perfectionism anxieties such as mistakes in questions, doubts about actions, and fear of not being validated by others, and inhomogeneity between expectations and results. This aspect has positive correlation with incompatibility indices such as negative emotion (Stoeber and Otto, 2006; Stoeber, Harris and Moon, 2007), the research findings concerning the pathological outcomes bear out this hypothesis (Hill, Zrull and Turlington, 1997). Which styles of comparison are used most often when facing stress-making situations and various types of anxiety concerning the achievement of high-level yardsticks in terms of positive or negative perfectionism (severally equal to normal or neurotic perfectionism)? The chief objective of the extant research is to find the response of the ensuing question: the question which has never been checked. The preliminary approaches to the comparison process

distinguish three chief styles: the comparison style of the axis problem whose main features concerns direct action to reduce pressure by increasing the stress-management skills. Avoidant-focused copying style, whose main feature is to eschew facing the stress-bearing factor? Enthusiasm-based comparison style whose identifying feature concerns cognitive strategies which postpone the deletion or solution of the stress-bearing factor (Billings and Mouse, 1981; Zidner and Endner, 1996).

2. Method

Participants

The statistical community of this research comprise all the undergraduates of the expertise degree of the educational year 1385-1386 of Tehran University. The Farsi version of the positive and negative perfectionism scale and the scale of Tehran comparison scales about undergraduates were conducted in the classroom collectively. The final sample of this research concerned 378 undergraduates (183 boys and 195 girls).

Results

The summary of the variance analysis (table 1) indicates that the positive and negative perfectionism grade of female and male undergraduates were not so significant nonetheless their grade difference in comparison style was crucial. That is why, the correlations coefficients between the research variables were reckoned separately for female and male specimen.

Table1.Means and standard deviations of positive and,negative perfectionism and copying styles

	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Positive perfectionism	15.67	73.81	15.46	75.26	15.56	74.56
Negative perfectionism	14.63	55.93	15.08	53.83	14.88	54.85
Problem Focus et coping style	6.23	59.45	6.24	57.31	6.35	58.35
Positive emotional focused coping style	5.96	60.18	5.84	61.84	5.95	61.03
Negative emotional focused coping style	5.75	39.29	5.75	41.61	5.86	40.48

According to the upshots of tables the surveyed F is a crucial one, ($p < 0.01$) and 32% of the variance pertinent to the negative enthusiasm-based comparison style is expressed by positive and negative perfectionism.

Table2.Results From Linear Multiple Regression, Analysis of Problem Focus coping style variance With a Control for the Effects of positive and negative perfectionism

odel	Index							
	SS	df	Ms	F	P	R	R ²	SE
Regression	8691.83	2	4345.91	255.10	0	0.749	0.576	4.12
residual	6388.36	315	17.03					

Variable	Index				
Regression	B	SEB	Beta	T	P
Positive	0.118	0.022	0.291	5.340	0.000

perfectionism					
Negative	-0.216	0.023	-0.508	-9.308	0.00
perfectionism					

The regression coefficients denote that positive ($B=0.081$, $t=-3.108$) and negative perfectionism ($t=5.545$, $B=0.151$) can express the variance of the negative enthusiasm-based comparison style in a crucial manner, namely, when those whose positive perfectionism is stronger face everyday stress-bearing factors, use negative enthusiasm-based comparison styles less than others and vice versa, those whose negative perfectionism is stronger, use negative enthusiasm-based strategies when facing everyday stresses. According to the above findings, research predictions on the type of positive and negative perfectionism style are corroborated on both levels. The research results indicated that positive perfectionism has a positive correlation with problem-based comparison styles and enthusiasm-based and negative correlation with negative enthusiasm-based style.

Table3. Results From Linear Multiple Regression, Analysis of positive. emotional-focused coping style variance With a Control for the Effects of positive and negative perfectionism

	Index		model					
	SS	df	Ms	F	P	R	R ²	SE
Regression	8238/53	2	4119/26	/06302	0/000	0/785	0/617	3/69
residual	5113/87	375	13/63					

	index			variable		
	B	SEB	Beta	T	P	
Regression						
Positive	0/123	0/020	321 0/	6/182		0/000
perfectionism						
Negative	-0/203	0/021	-0/507	-9/779		0/000
perfectionism						

Table4. Results From Linear Multiple Regression, Analysis of negative. emotional-focused coping style variance With a Control for the Effects of positive and negative perfectionism

Model	Index					R	R ²	SE
	SS	df	Ms	F	P			
Regression	4174/25	2	2087/12	98/08	0/000	0/568	0/322	4/84
Residual	8786/20	375	23/43					

Variable	Index				
Regression	B	SEB	Beta	T	P
Positive	-0/081	0/026	-0/215	-3/108	0/ 002
perfectionism					
Negative	0/151	0/027	0/383	5/545	0/ 00
perfectionism					

Discussion

Summarily the upshots of this research indicated that perfectionism can be used in two positive and negative orientations to foresee the strategies needed to confront stress. Two groups of hypothetical and practical outcomes of the research can be mentioned. The provision of the educational programmes of the cognitive and emotive skills at the clinical and practical level can affect the positive and negative characteristics of the perfectionism. Such programmes can be merged in the framework of the interfering programmes in the field of treatments based upon the cognitively processing style and emotions tuning to enhance their efficiency. Findings of the extant research can be used to validate the current postulations on perfectionism and comparison. They can also make novel questions and hypotheses on the relationship of diverse perfectionism dimensions with manners of comparing stress.

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